

April 13, 76.
the Hague

Dear Lila,

In the meantime you will have returned to your 'nest in the woods' and now I want to thank you for your kindness in sending me the book of Guenther which arrived a few days ago. I did not read it yet but glanced through it and as for the contents I think he made many studies of Mahayana, Tantrism. What he says makes me think of John Blofield. I find it very confusing. Lobha is lobha and paññā is paññā. Why does he repeat the idea that libido is important for attaining enlightenment? Is that Buddhism? Honestly, I must tell you that anything which is not about realities as they appear through the six doors I do not find interesting anymore. Many books are full of conventional terms, and they do not explain realities.

I hope you had a good stay in Thailand. If you made notes of what Phra Dhammadharo and Khun Sujin said, I would be very happy if you would repeat them to me. I cannot get enough of nama and rupa, I need reminders all the time. I really would appreciate it very much if you would tell me about it, and also please tell me about the kusala you found in Thailand. When you share these experiences with me the cittas are kusala, you praise those who should be praised and you help me to have kusala cittas as well. These are forms of dāna, and we should take any opportunity for kusala, be it dāna, sīla or bhāvanā. We should not overlook small matters, like even mentioning the kusala of others.

When the citta is not kusala, vipāka or kiriya it is akusala all the time. Last night I read in one of Khun Sujin's Thai lectures that people tell children: don't do this, don't do that, but they do not explain them what else to do instead of what they should not do. It is important to teach children many forms of dāna as well as respect to parents, teachers, etc. and to explain them that at such moments the cittas are kusala. Knowing that akusala cittas arise all the time can be a condition to perform more kusala. Just now, while reading this, are there no akusala cittas? There are for sure: think of the many javana-cittas with moha, arising in between kusala cittas. Just now, and again, again.

Then we pick up a newspaper, we walk, we stretch, and if there is no awareness, what is there? Very often lobha, even though we do not notice it, for instance when the lobha is not accompanied by pleasant feeling.

The characteristics of realities should be learnt

not merely the names. Khun Sujin said, if we put names in, we get doubts: is it lobha without ditthi, or is it lobha with ditthi? All these moments the cittas have concepts as object, not a reality, and thus it will not help to know the characteristic appearing now: it may be doubt, appearing now, or a rūpa, who can tell? We may look at our hand (but this is not seeing, it is thinking of a concept) and have an idea of my hand. We may not ^(be) expressively thinking: 'This is mine', ^(but there may) be just a kind of clinging. Now, what happens is that we ^(insert) our own understanding, which is theoretical, reasoning. We may be pleased: at last we can be aware of ditthi, but no, this is still thinking, although we may not have noticed it that it was thinking, reasoning. Little by little we may learn when there is awareness, and when there is thinking or reasoning. When we really have found out that the inserting of our thinking in the place of just mindfulness of any characteristic which appears is inspired by our clinging, and that it is useless, there will be more conditions for awareness in the right way.

Khun Sujin stresses again and again that the right object of awareness is most important, and when we mind so much about having awareness or not, we forget that the object should be right. This means: we should not take for mindfulness what ^(appear) is only thinking about what we believe to be realities which we have ideas: such and such must be awareness, such and such should be objects of awareness, but then we go all wrong, we are led by our clinging. It happens to all of us.

I will make a choice from the 16 points you mention, but not go over them all at once, so, it is good if you keep your copy, I will refer to it later on again.

point 12: You were very concentrated on building the fire and aware while you handled each piece of wood. Was sati: present or not?

Awareness of each piece of wood while you handled it, is awareness in 'common language' and it is not sati. When there is mindfulness of hardness as just hardness when it appears, no wood in the hardness, no hand in the hardness, it shows there is sati and it brings a little detachment from the 'self'.

Then there may be thinking about the fire: the reality of thinking ^(ing) (which is actually thinking of concepts) also has a characteristic and when it appears it can be realized. There is also the experience of hardness which may appear. When it appears and it is realized as only a kind of nāma which just experiences

3.

hardness (it cannot see, it cannot think, it cannot walk or stand, it is only the reality which experiences through body-sense), then it shows there is sati. In this way paññā which detaches from the self can be developed. It is not easy. It sounds simple, but it is not easy, we have so much ignorance and clinging accumulated. You see how different sati is from what we mean in common language by awareness. It is the same with 'concentration'. It may be we are concentrated with lobha or dosa when building the fire.

point 13 about ditthi: What I write above might help. We try to find ditthi, then we cannot know its characteristic. But there are all kinds of clinging, also without ditthi, just to sensuous objects. The sotapanna has eradicated the latent tendency of ditthi.

point 14: You seem to stress dosa so much. Why not the other defilements? We have a great deal of moha too, and of lobha. You refer to the Visuddhimagga where : it deals with different temperaments. The advices given as to lodging, this is for samatha, not for vipassanā. And who can tell which temperament we have? Can we tell without developed awareness? Then we will find that we have much more moha than we thought. You seem preoccupied with controlling dosa. That is not vipassana: awareness of any, any characteristic which appears, no choosing, no trying to control. Dosa is sankhara dhamma, it arises because there are conditions. Our deeprooted clinging conditions it. If things are not the way we like them to be we have dosa. When there is mindfulness more often, one can learn that it is only a kind of nama, only that. There are so many other kinds of realities too. If we are so preoccupied to control dosa we forget to be aware of for instance rupa. Is there no hardness when there is dosa? Should it not be known as well? And who can control vipaka? You might try to have a clean environment in order to have less dosa, but vipaka is beyond control. One day something will happen and what will you do? When there is more right awareness it is through paññā that we will see conditioned realities as conditioned realities, beyond control. Thus we will face situations with more wisdom. That is the only way. with metta, Nina